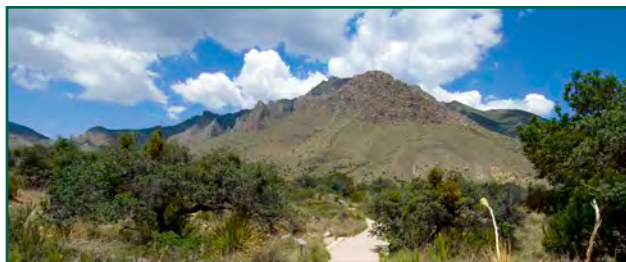


# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE FIELD NOTES

JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER ♦ FEBRUARY 2013



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NUMBER 3



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## Welcome to the General Land Office



Welcome to the February 2013 edition of *Field Notes*, a newsletter from the state's oldest and most diverse agency—the Texas General Land Office.

As you may have heard by now, the Land Office is planning an exhibit sure to interest Texas history devotees: The return of William Barret Travis' "Victory or Death" letter to the Alamo. Quite possibly Texas' most precious document, the letter was written at the Alamo by Travis, then dispatched by courier on horseback to rally support for the besieged Texans. It has not returned to its birthplace since Travis penned it 177 years ago.

Believe me, it has been a huge effort to plan this exhibit—set for February 23 through March 7—and secure funding, security, transportation and a thousand other details great and small. Inside you'll find stories about the exhibit and our "See the Letter" Facebook photo contest.

There's also a piece about the famous Alamo gift shop, recently reopened under new management after major renovations. The gift shop is the main revenue source for operating, maintaining and preserving the Alamo, so please be sure to visit after viewing the Travis letter.

Another article in this edition concerns an issue of growing importance to all Texans—water. The Land Office oversees a tract of state land near New Braunfels that sits atop vast amounts of brackish water. As fresh water becomes more scarce and expensive, it will become economical to extract this brackish water and make it potable via desalination. If it proves feasible, we have millions of acres of state lands that can be tapped for brackish water.

You'll also find a story about colorful Land Office spokesman Jim Suydam and another about the Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest. Thanks for taking time to learn about the General Land Office and its hard-working people. If you have any questions, please refer to the last page where you'll find contact information for each department at the agency.

Sincerely,



Jerry Patterson  
Commissioner

## Travis "Victory or Death" Letter Returns to the Alamo for the First Time

This February and March, Col. William Barret Travis' "Victory or Death" letter will return to the Alamo for the first time in 177 years. For two weeks, visitors can view the letter where it was penned, thanks to the joint efforts of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), the

Texas General Land Office and the Alamo. Since February 24, 1836, when it was written at the Alamo to warn of Santa Anna's arrival, Travis' letter has rarely been displayed outside of Austin.

It's one of the most important documents in the

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# Travis “Victory or Death” Letter Returns to the Alamo

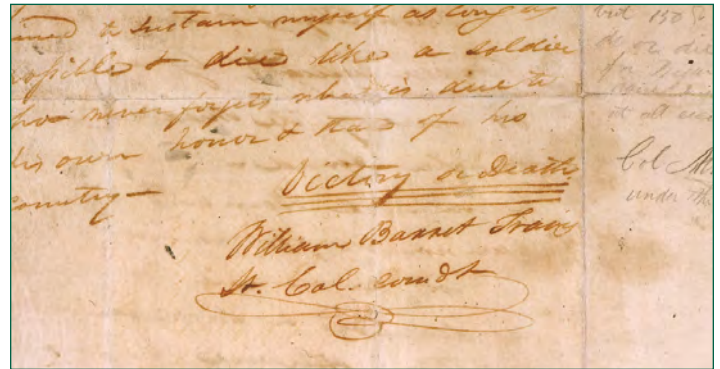
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TSLAC collection and arguably the most significant document in Texas history. The Land Office—in charge of the Alamo since September 2011—has received permission to exhibit the letter and is raising \$100,000 in private donations to pay for its transportation and security, as well as outreach expenses. The historic document will be available for viewing from February 23 to March 7, 2013, during which 10,000-15,000 history buffs are expected daily, or about 200,000 total for the duration of the exhibit.

Numerous precautions are being taken to ensure the letter’s safety while en route to-and-from the Alamo and while on display, including a security escort, special barriers, a detailed traffic flow plan, armed guards, bag checks, security wanding of visitors, video surveillance and a detailed disaster response plan. The exact details of the letter’s trips between Austin and San Antonio, as well as security precautions during the exhibit, will not be made available to the public.

The letter will be housed in a state-of-the-art, custom-built exhibit case constructed by world-renowned case manufacturer Glasbau REIER of Lautau, Germany. In order to keep the fragile document safe, the case is equipped with shatterproof glass, a desiccant chamber, dimmable fiber-optic lighting and a weighted, steel-reinforced base to prevent toppling. Before the exhibit opens, the Alamo’s environmental conditions will have been monitored for six months and alterations made to minimize harmful UV rays and extremes of temperature and humidity.

“There’s a balance between preservation and public access,”



In 1893, a cash-strapped descendant of William B. Travis sold the letter to the state of Texas for \$85, the equivalent of \$2,200 in today’s currency.

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. “In every Texan’s lifetime there should be one opportunity to see this letter in person. The Land Office, TSLAC and Alamo staffs are hard at work on this unique and memorable event.”

The free exhibit will include significant William Barret Travis documents from the Land Office and Alamo collections. For more information on the Travis Letter project, please visit [www.travis-letter.org](http://www.travis-letter.org), or find it on Twitter @TravisLetter, and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TravisLetter>. To learn more about the Travis letter, please visit the Texas State Library and Archives website at <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/travis-letter.html>.

## “See the Letter” Facebook Photo Contest Now Open



Travis wrote his famous letter here 177 years ago.

When the brash, 26-year-old commander of the Alamo wrote his plea for help on February 24, 1836, he was clear about his chances for surviving the siege by Mexican troops under Santa Anna. But Col. William Barret Travis knew the power of his words. He chose them carefully and crafted a message that transformed the Tex-

as Revolution into an American fight against tyranny.

Now, for the first time in 177 years, the Travis letter is heading back to the Alamo.

And so will a lucky winner, thanks to the “See The Letter” Facebook Photo Contest sponsored by the Texas General Land Office Save Texas History program. One lucky winner will receive travel and accommodations to San Antonio, donated by Southwest Airlines and the Emily Morgan by Doubletree Hilton.

“Courage. Duty. Loyalty. Liberty. All of these words describe the heart of Travis’ message in 1836,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. “I want to see how these values are portrayed today, and what this letter means to Texans across the country.”

Entrants will submit original photography that captures the essence of the Travis letter by illustrating the meaning of courage,

duty, loyalty and valor. Photographs must be in digital format and include a caption. This is a skill-based contest and chance plays no part in the determination of winners.

One grand prize winner will be selected to win four round-trip tickets from any Southwest Airlines domestic destination and hotel accommodations for four people for two nights at the historic Emily Morgan Hotel in San Antonio, within easy walking distance of the Alamo.

To enter the contest, which runs through February 21, visit The Travis Letter Facebook Page, complete an entry form to include your name, address, telephone number, email address and photo caption and submit it with your photograph in accordance with the entry instructions that follow. Each entry consists of an entry form and a single image. Contestants may enter only one image. By submitting an entry, each entrant agrees to the Official Rules and warrants that his or her entry complies with all requirements set out in the Official Rules, available at [www.travisletter.org](http://www.travisletter.org).

The Travis Letter Returns Exhibit is being coordinated by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the Texas General Land Office and the Alamo. The letter will be the highlight of a comprehensive exhibit on Travis and the Texas Revolution from February 23 to March 7 in the Alamo Shrine.

To learn more about Travis’ “Victory or Death” letter and to read the full text, visit [www.travisletter.org](http://www.travisletter.org).

Visit [www.southwest.com/citizenship](http://www.southwest.com/citizenship) to read the Southwest Airlines One Report™ and see how Southwest is doing its part to be a good citizen while underscoring a commitment to the triple bottom line of Performance, People, and Planet.



# Patterson Drilling Down for Answer to Water Crisis

**A**long Interstate 35, between Austin and San Antonio, the Texas Economic Miracle is thirsting for water. Tight restrictions on the Edwards Aquifer and the high costs of pipelines are choking off the potential growth of homes and businesses.

But on one 2,000-acre tract of land north of New Braunfels — still parched from recent drought — Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson hopes he's found the water needed to help end Central Texas' water crisis.

As chairman of the School Land Board, which manages the real estate portfolio of the state's \$26 billion Permanent School Fund, Patterson is investigating the feasibility of tapping into Texas' abundant brackish groundwater, desalinating it, and selling it.

"We don't need to live one step away from crisis and drought," Patterson said. "Texas may be short on water, but not innovation. Desal is part of Texas' water future and we're going to start right here."

Patterson said the General Land Office has contracted with experts to study the hydrology and geology of several Permanent School Fund tracts of land along the I-35 corridor. "If the water is there, then I think the School Land Board is ready to invest the time and resources needed to deliver an entirely new and drought-resistant source of water for Central Texas," Patterson said. "This is a game-changer, a commonsense fix for the Texas water crisis."



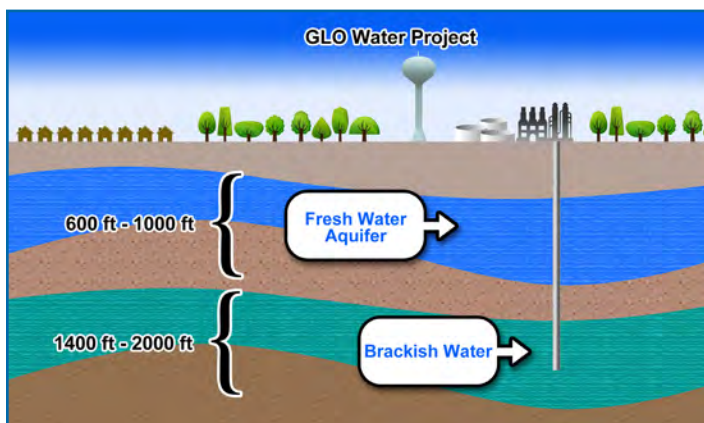
Commissioner Jerry Patterson has the full attention of journalists at a press event held on a 2,000-acre PSF tract north of New Braunfels. Vast amounts of brackish water there can help alleviate the state's H<sub>2</sub>O crisis.

The impact of developing a new source of water in Central Texas will be seen all the way downstream, Patterson said, potentially benefiting rice farmers, petrochemical facilities, utilities and even the health of the state's bays and estuaries. "Adding desal to the mix would help mitigate the impact of a drought on the Highland Lakes," Patterson said. "Desal in Central Texas would help all the way to the coast."

Patterson hopes to develop a groundwater desalination model that could be replicated on other state-owned tracts of land all over Texas. "Texas has an abundance of brackish water," Patterson said. "I hope to put the General Land Office in the water business state-wide."

Even if the drought gripping Texas were lifted, the state's population is expected to double in the next 50 years.

"We can't plan on taking any more fresh water from the Edwards Aquifer," Patterson said. "It takes 30 years to get a new lake permitted and filled. Pipelines cost a fortune. If we want to keep growing, we need water and I think desal is a common-sense part of that solution."



## About Commissioner Jerry Patterson

Jerry Patterson was born in Houston, Texas on November 15, 1946. He graduated from Texas A&M, Class of 1969 and received his commission in the United States Marine Corps. Volunteering for duty in Vietnam in 1972, Patterson was later designated as a Naval Flight Officer and served in Marine fighter squadrons until his retirement from the Marine Corps Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1993.

Five consecutive generations of Patterson's family have served our nation in time of war.

As state senator for District 11 (Harris, Galveston, Brazoria), Patterson's major legislative successes include passage of the historic concealed handgun law, a constitutional amendment allowing home equity lending, the state coastal management plan and the creation of the Texas State Veterans Home Program. A tireless advocate for his fellow veterans, he chaired

the first Veterans Affairs committee in the Texas Senate.

Since his election as Texas Land Commissioner in 2002, Patterson has modernized and revitalized the Texas General Land Office, the oldest agency in Texas. He has diversified and increased the Permanent School Fund, made Texas a renewable energy leader, protected state lands and overseen the greatest expansion of veterans benefits since World War II.

Jerry resides in Austin and has four children: twins Samantha and Cole, born in 2004, and Emily and Travis. His daughter Emily is an attorney working in Kosovo for an agency funded, in part, by the U.S. State Department. His son Travis is a graduate of Texas A&M, where he was commissioned as a Marine Lieutenant. Travis recently returned from serving his 2nd tour of duty in Iraq as a U.S. Marine attack helicopter pilot.

# Change Comes to the Famed Alamo Gift Shop



Visitors get a first-hand look at the reimagined Alamo Gift Shop when it reopened earlier this month.

After sitting in the shadow of the historic Alamo church for 76 years, the Alamo Gift Shop finally got some long-awaited attention. On October 1, for the first time, a private company began operating the gift shop for the Cradle of Texas Liberty under a contract with the Texas General Land Office. Event Network, a premiere retail operator for cultural attractions nationwide, has assumed operations and is transforming the venue into a vital part of the visitor experience.

"For years, the gift shop was just a place to buy a souvenir of your visit to the Alamo," Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. "Now, for thousands of visitors, the Alamo Gift Shop will be a part of that special visit. It's an exciting change and one that will not only maintain the reverence of this iconic mission, but help ensure its future."



A William Barret Travis reenactor greets visitors at the newly reopened Alamo Gift Shop.

The Alamo relies almost entirely on revenue from the gift shop for continued operation. For their last fiscal year, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas—who managed the gift shop since its inception in the 1930s—earned \$4.6 million in gross sales.

Event Network is no stranger in transforming reverence into revenue, boasting an impressive track record partnering with historic locations, iconic destinations and national treasures across the country including Gettysburg National Military Park and the Abraham Lincoln

Presidential Library and Museum.

"The Alamo is a shrine unlike any other in the world," said Jerry Gilbert, Event Network Vice President of Marketing, "and our mission is to deliver a retail experience that continues to be worthy of such a place. We hope it will become a seamless extension of the visitor experience."

Often mistaken as part of the original Alamo compound, the building housing the Alamo Gift Shop was built in 1937 as one of nine Texas Centennial Museums honoring the 100th anniversary of Texas independence. Dedicated in 1938, the Alamo Museum held historic artifacts until the DRT decided to also use the space to sell souvenirs in order to raise money for care of the mission.

"The Alamo Museum was dedicated 76 years ago," Gilbert said. "We're grateful to have the opportunity to continue to use this building to educate our customers about the history of the Alamo. We have made historical integrity a centerpiece to our philosophy for the Alamo Gift Shop."

Event Network honors the original intent of the building by incorporating historic artifacts from the Alamo collection as part of the store design. The original historic building and architecture remain unaltered.

The Land Office and Event Network intend the Gift Shop to be a destination in itself, selling one-of-a-kind merchandise that can be found only at the Alamo. Prior to being awarded the contract, Event Network commissioned artist Stephen Fishwick to create a dramatic painting of the Alamo and Texas flag for use on exclusive merchandise.

"The reimagined merchandise assortment at the Alamo Gift Shop offers something for everyone, and will truly elevate the Alamo brand," Gilbert said.

One thing that hasn't changed much is the staff, which was largely rehired by Event Network to continue in the new gift shop.

"Continuity of personnel is important to us," Gilbert said. "These employees are dedicated and passionate about the Alamo and that enthusiasm is vital to our success."

The reimagined Alamo Gift Shop recently reopened with dramatic flare, as a William Barret Travis reenactor slashed through the ceremonial ribbon with his sword. For more information on the Alamo Gift Shop changes, please visit the Texas General Land Office website at [glo.texas.gov](http://glo.texas.gov) or the Official Alamo website at [thealamo.org](http://thealamo.org).



The reimagined Alamo Gift Shop blends sophisticated merchandising with an appealing layout and displays of historic objects.



# Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest Accepting Entries Through March 4

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson is calling for entries in the 17th annual Adopt-A-Beach Treasures of the Texas Coast Children's Art Contest. The deadline to submit artwork is Monday, March 4.

Winning artwork will appear together in the 2014 Adopt-A-Beach calendar, which will be distributed throughout the state.

The annual competition encourages schoolchildren to learn more about the Texas coast and express what they've learned through their art. Open to students in grades K-6 across Texas, the contest motivates thousands of young artists each year.

This year's grand prize winner will receive two round-trip coach-class tickets from United Airlines to any United destination anywhere in North America, one 7-night Caribbean cruise from Royal Caribbean International departing out of Galveston, Miami, or Ft. Lauderdale, and a class party at Schlitterbahn Waterpark in New Braunfels. The grand prize winner's teacher will also receive two round-trip coach-class tickets from United Airlines, and one 7-night Caribbean cruise courtesy of Royal Caribbean International.

Ten winners will be chosen from each of four grade-level categories (K-2nd, 3rd-4th, 5th, and 6th) for a total of 40 winners. One grand prize winner will be chosen from among the 40 finalists.

All 40 winners will receive a ticket to the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi, two all-day passes to Schlitterbahn Waterpark in New Braunfels, a ticket to the permanent exhibit hall at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, a ticket to the Houston Zoo, a certificate of recognition and prizes from the Texas General Land Office and a calendar displaying the winning artwork.

Artwork must be displayed on a plain sheet of white 8 1/2-inch by 11-inch paper and can be in any medium except computer generated. Three-dimensional art or artwork displaying logos, product brands and/or store names is ineligible. Only one entry per stu-




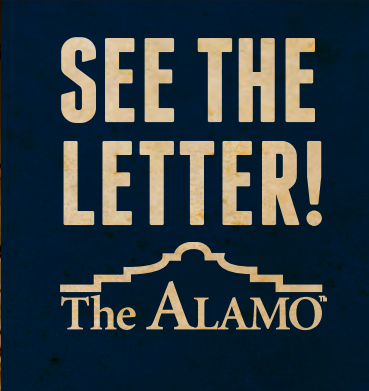
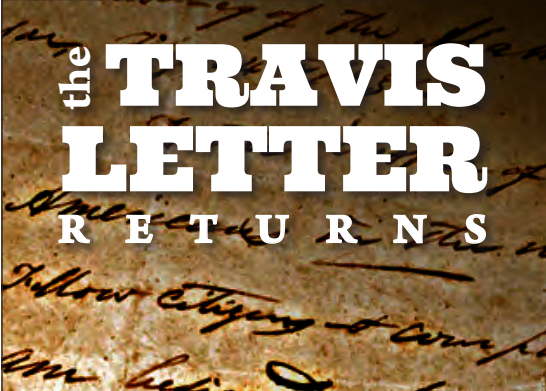
Clayton Graves of Dallas won the 2012 grand prize with this vibrant work of art.

dent is allowed, and all entries must have a completed parental release form taped to the back. Parental release forms may be printed from the website located at [www.texasadoptabeach.org](http://www.texasadoptabeach.org). Each contest entry must be postmarked by Monday, March 4, 2013.

Students are encouraged to color copy their artwork prior to sending it in because all submitted artwork becomes property of the Texas General Land Office and cannot be returned.

This year's contest sponsors are Royal Caribbean International, United Airlines, Schlitterbahn Waterparks, the Texas State Aquarium, the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Houston Zoo.



For more information and contest guidelines on the "Treasures of the Texas Coast" 2013 Children's Art Contest, please contact the General Land Office at 1-877-TXCOAST or visit our website at [www.texasadoptabeach.org](http://www.texasadoptabeach.org).



★ **FREE EXHIBIT: FEBRUARY 23 TO MARCH 7, 2013** ★

**THE ICONIC "VICTORY OR DEATH" LETTER RETURNS TO THE ALAMO FOR THE FIRST TIME.**

*A joint project of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the Texas General Land Office and the Alamo.*



**WWW.TRAVISLETTER.ORG**

# Spokesweasel Par Excellence

**I**t's funny how things work out sometimes. If Jim Suydam hadn't written a newspaper article that irked Mark Loeffler and Jerry Patterson, he might not be the spokesman for the General Land Office. Suydam was working as a reporter for the Austin American Statesman at the time, in January 2003, and Jerry Patterson was on the verge of becoming Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson.

"I wrote a story about their campaign for Land Commissioner that they didn't like," Suydam recalled. "Mark called me, and Commissioner Patterson also called to tell me so."

At the time, Suydam had been a newspaper reporter and editor for about 11 years, during which he came to know most of the big time journalists in the Texas press. "I think my background helps the folks here understand the press and the press understand us, so we can get out the real story about how this agency affects people," he said. "I've also had the chance to work with Commissioner Patterson long enough that I can understand and better articulate his views."

Over the past 10 years, Suydam has not only learned how Commissioner Patterson thinks, and his position on most issues, he's also "learned a little bit about a lot," including Texas coastal geology, the long-term care industry, the retail energy market, potential alternative energy sources, FEMA contracting, historic document restoration, oil spill cleanup, Incident Command System protocol and much more.

"I'm lucky enough to be able to peek in on every department at the GLO," Suydam said. "The variety of things that go on here is really pretty amazing and it's a full-time job to keep up and make sure Commissioner Patterson and the agency are well represented whenever they're in the media."

An ever-evolving challenge is telling the agency's stories as traditional news media outlets lay off reporters and other staff members. "It's important to keep up with the way folks take in their information and work to stay on top of social and other non-traditional media," Suydam said.

When asked why the press secretary position is needed at the Land Office, Suydam said "That's the big secret I hoped no one would ever figure out, at least not while I'm still here. The fact is, Commissioner Patterson is his own best press secretary. The best I can do is to help make sure the rest of the agency is well-represented in the media. Also, maybe more importantly, a big part of this job is just listening to what folks out there are saying about the General Land Office and working to resolve issues before they hit the press. So in some ways, the press office isn't just the mouth, but the ears and eyes of the agency."

One time, Suydam sent out a joke press release offering to settle a border dispute with New Mexico with a duel to the death between the New Mexico Land Commissioner and Commissioner Patterson, who are friends. "That made it all the way to page A2 of the Sunday Washington Post," Suydam marveled. A less enjoyable incident was the dedication of the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen. "I had an awful experience when (former Secretary of State) James Baker was speaking," Suydam said. "He gently chided me for an embarrassingly late flyover by the Commemorative Air Force. There were others, but as a good press secretary, I'll never tell them."

Each time Suydam has helped at the dedication of a state veterans home or cemetery, he's been touched by the community support. He helped organize a hugely successful post-Ike fundraiser



Jim Suydam visits a meteorological tower collecting data for an offshore wind farm. A reporter once called Suydam a "spokesweasel," an epithet he bears with pride.

involving President George H.W. Bush. He's talked with joyous surfers after Surfside Beach was rebuilt and angry ones when the agency tore down Meacom's Pier.

"And now I'm honored to be part of the effort to bring Travis' "Victory or Death" letter back to the Alamo. These are things that will someday be Texas history and I have been lucky enough to be a part of it all," Suydam said.

## Did you know?

**In 1879, the General Land Office appropriated 3 million acres of public land in the Panhandle to finance the current Capitol building. The land was sold to investors and would later become the famed XIT Ranch, valued at 50 cents per acre by Land Commissioner William C. Walsh.**



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## Agency Newsletters

Veterans Voice

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/\\_publications/veterans-voice-winter-2012.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/veterans-voice-winter-2012.pdf)

On the Coast

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/on-the-coast-spring-2011.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/on-the-coast-spring-2011.pdf)

The Responder

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/responder-december-2012.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/responder-december-2012.pdf)

Saving Texas History

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/\\_publications/STH-newsletter-fall-2012.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/history-and-archives/_publications/STH-newsletter-fall-2012.pdf)

Cabin Connection

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/cabin-connection-08-12.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/cabin-connection-08-12.pdf)

Adopt-A-Beach

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/\\_publications/aab-newsletter-summer2012.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/what-we-do/caring-for-the-coast/_publications/aab-newsletter-summer2012.pdf)

Voices of Veterans

[http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/\\_publications/vov-newsletter-summer-2012.pdf](http://www.glo.texas.gov/vlb/_publications/vov-newsletter-summer-2012.pdf)

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For comments or suggestions about this newsletter, please contact Paul Sturrock at paul.sturrock@glo.texas.gov or call 512.936.1948. If you would like to unsubscribe, please click on the link above and write unsubscribe on the subject line.